S024.003

The Women's Audit

INTRODUCTION

In 1984 the Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women was formed to examine the situation of women in the different constituencies of the University of Toronto. Recommendations and proposals were presented to the President of the University, and the report *A Future for Women at the University of Toronto* appeared in 1986. The Committee remains a free-standing group with members from the different campus constituencies, continuing to work on such strategic issues as childcare and gender neutral language.

This year, we are working in response to the frustration many campus women feel at the slow progress on women's issues. The current climate seems to be one of institutional backsliding and attitudinal backlash. While the University has stated a commitment to gender equity, it has been slow to develop and implement the specific policies that would make this commitment a reality. This Audit is designed to provide an update on the status of women and women's issues at the U of T.

MAJOR POLICY AREAS

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: A Sexual Harassment Policy has been approved, and the first Sexual Harassment Officer was appointed in 1988. The Office handled approximately 60 informal complaints in its first year and resolved 5 of 6 formal cases through mediation. Significant educational work has raised awareness of these issues across campus. A review of the policy is in progress. Extending the deadline for complaints and a guarantee of legal expenses for complainants would strengthen the Policy.

Some campus constituencies (e.g., teaching hospital staff members not hired on university contracts) lack protection in this area. In addition, there should be specific sexual harassment policy coverage for unionized workers. At present, this is included in collective agreements, but sexual harassment is treated like any other form of grievance and the time limit for reporting incidents is as low as 15 days.

GENDER NEUTRAL LANGUAGE: No policy yet. A joint working group of the Ad Hoc Committee and the Status of Women Office produced and recently published draft guidelines. These guidelines bring the University up to date on thinking about gender neutral language and provide options for including women as well as men in daily and academic language use. The University community is now providing feedback on the guidelines. The next step is to formulate and pass policy to mandate use of the guidelines in University communications.

OISE has had a gender neutral language policy for some time, which requests staff to avoid sexist or racist language in communications and scholarly work.

HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY: No policy to date. Outcries against sexist, racist and homophobic material that has appeared in some campus newspapers—notably the *Toike Oike* and The *Underground*—have led to the formation of a University committee to draft policy on Student Societies and Human Rights. Its mandate will probably be expanded to include human rights in all areas of campus life. The Committee will report June 1990.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY: The University's much touted Employment Equity Policy is really only a statement of intent. Interest groups are still spending considerable time and effort in trying to convince the administration to adopt specific policies to make employment equity a reality.

In all sectors of the University workforce women are clustered in the lowest paying jobs. Furthermore, for faculty women there is a serious problem with numbers. The percentage of female faculty has remained unchanged over the last three years at 13.7%, and some figures indicate a slight decline. A Faculty Employment Equity Policy outlining means for ensuring equity for women in the areas of recruitment and job entry was developed jointly with the Faculty Association, but the administration has now withdrawn its support. The current review of the academic appointments policy provides an opportunity to raise this issue again, as well as the issue of employment equity for aboriginal people of Canada, people from visible minorities, and people with disabilities.

•U of T's environment evolved to suit men who didn't face significant interruptions by such family responsibilities as child-bearing and child-rearing. Systemic changes are required to provide fair opportunities for women.

•The policies needed to achieve fairness for women are non-existent or underdeveloped. Without policy, achievements can be eroded.

•Women remain differently and unequally placed in relation to the University and its services. The representation of women is uneven and unjust; for women of colour, even more so.

•Employment for women staff and faculty members has changed little in five years: they tend to remain clustered in lower paying job classes and contractually limited positions.

•Officers who are responsible for issues of concern to women (e.g., the Status of Women Officer, the Employment Equity Officer) need mandates, not just advisory roles. Under-staffing in this area is also a problem.

•The Status of Women and Employment Equity Officers need more independence from the administration.

•U of T is an active place for women and women's work. However women's activities are often parallel to the main structures and are under or un-funded.

•Women's material and women's perspectives need to be integrated into the curriculum rather than superadded.

•Students are still discouraged from including women-related material and women's perspectives in their work.

For other staff, women make up the overall majority of employees, and a different approach is needed. This centres around a more aggressive policy for internal hiring to move these women through the ranks rather than leave them in the occupational ghettos they are now stranded in. This requires the development of such support systems as accessible career counselling, the drafting and publishing of career paths with bridging positions from one stream to another, and accessible training and development courses to prepare women for promotion.

Despite being given an apparently high profile, the Employment Equity Officer, hired in 1986, has no administrative power to initiate and carry through policy development. In the Staff Association's view, the Officer is further hampered by being subordinate to the Department of Human Resources, rather than operating at arm's length.

REPRESENTATION: Recent recommendations ensure the presence of women on some committees (e.g., faculty hiring). However, the representation of women on committees and boards of Governing Council, for example, ranges from only 5% to 30%. Of special concern is the low number of women (roughly 5%) on such crucial committees as Academic Planning and Priorities and the Business Board. Furthermore, women remain clustered at the "bottom" in almost all sectors: as students, not teachers; as lower or middle managers, but not in positions of power; and so forth.

CHILD CARE: The U of T/OISE community, with a population of 60,000, has three centres with a maximum total of only 125 spaces.

U of T's daycare policy commits the University to providing space and maintenance for its centres and any new ones developed. However, the administration does not undertake to develop centres itself. Also, the administration has stated that there is no space for further centres and has not planned to include childcare facilities in new development. There remains some possibility of negotiating space in the new graduate student residence.

Because of the lack of support services women often have to make difficult choices about child-bearing and child-rearing; the biological fact of being a child-bearer is not adequately accounted for in any career in the University.

Although women faculty are entitled to 17 weeks maternity leave, they may feel that taking the whole leave will jeopardize their chances of getting tenure and/or renewing their research grants. When they are on leave, some male colleagues think of it as a holiday, although recent research has shown that female academics are actually at their most productive during their child-bearing years.

The Employment Equity Officer and members of the Ad Hoc Committee formed a working group on child care, which has produced a brochure on child care resources available in the area. However, this group is small and has no mandate. What is needed is institutional commitment and active participation from all sectors of the University.

A group of Scarborough College staff and faculty is planning a centre there, and Erindale has recently established an Erindale Daycare Committee.

RACISM: Women of colour remain even more severely under-represented at all levels and in all sectors, including campus groups. The University tends to see racism (like sexism) as a case of isolated incidents, but not as a systemic discrimination which affects all people of colour on campus, and women doubly.

WOMEN AND DISABILITIES: Technological and staff support has been boosted by an $800,000 grant from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. However, this cannot be used for retrofitting buildings. OISE has received a similar although smaller grant, and will use this to hire a Special Needs Co-ordinator and to help with communication services (braille signs, telecommunications devices for the deaf, signing). Scarborough College is designing ten spaces with support services in their new residences.

Despite progress, building access and street-level mobility remain a severe problem, and attitudinal biases persist. Women with disabilities still face special financial and personal safety problems.

HETEROSEXISM: Recent residence rule changes allow same-sex couples to qualify for spaces in the married students' residences. However, staff and faculty benefit plans continue to exclude same-sex partners.

Recent homophobic incidents on the campus in newspapers like The Underground and in orientation activities like those at New College have led to the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee on Homophobia.

SAFETY AND SECURITY: Campus safety continues to be an area of concern; and a Safety Audit Committee of the Women's Centre is evaluating various buildings and areas of the campus to make specific suggestions for improvement. Lighting remains poor in such areas as Philosopher's Walk and parking lots, and many buildings are unsafe (Hart House women's locker room in particular). Rather than having security people and building security procedures in place, dealing with disturbances is often left to individual employees, usually female staff, creating both a personal and an institutional security risk. U of T does have a University Advisory Committee on Personal Safety and Security, but it meets only sporadically and few people are aware of its existence. A Safety Awareness Officer will soon be appointed.

WOMEN AS STUDENTS

ACCESSIBILITY: A recent survey conducted by the Women's Centre found that women in all constituencies identified lack of access as a major issue. This is a two-fold problem: girls are discouraged from pursuing higher education in some disciplines by social pressures; and because women are likely to earn significantly less than men, they are more likely to be deterred by economic barriers. Lack of access is particularly acute for single female heads of households, a large and increasing group.

The Transitional Year Programme (TYP), the Pre-University Programme, and Woodsworth College remain the primary access points for students from traditionally under-represented groups, e.g., women with family responsibilities, lower income groups, and first generation university students. TYP is well-recognized, but has a curricular imbalance (e.g., currently lacks a math and science instructor), and thus TYP students can be prepared only for humanities and social science programmes. Woodsworth experiences continuing space and staffing problems, and students taking a Woodsworth degree have restricted options for third and fourth year courses, especially in the sciences.

Criteria for admission may discriminate against women whose educational careers were interrupted, by acknowledging only formal education and discounting other forms of learning and life skills.

FUNDING: Toronto living is unaffordable, yet tuition raises seem imminent. OSAP is inadequate and inflexible. The federal government, under intense pressure, has halted its plans to cap funding for Native students, but its policies continue to funnel Native students into community colleges and to restrict graduate study.

Cutbacks and new provincial emphases on science and technology will most affect the humanities and social sciences, where women primarily enrol. The situation of low-income women and single female heads of households remains particularly acute, as funding and support services are entirely inadequate to their situation. This compounds the problem of access these women face: they are likely to leave the University with an enormous burden of debt.

Housing is a particular difficulty in Toronto, with prices the highest in the country and residence space at a premium. Women students find it difficult to locate safe, affordable housing.

ENROLMENT IN NON-TRADITIONAL AREAS: Women's enrolment continues to increase in professional schools such as Law and Medicine. However, women currently make up only 17% of Engineering students; 15% in Physical Sciences; and proportions

are less at the graduate level (e.g., 8.5% in graduate Electrical Engineering). In addition, attrition rates for these areas are high. Some faculties and departments (e.g., Applied Science, Electrical Engineering) take positive steps to encourage pre-university women.

WOMEN AS GRADUATE STUDENTS

STUDIES: Female graduate students face special problems, as they are often seen as less able than men to succeed at higher study. Proportionately fewer women than men complete their graduate degrees; preliminary evidence shows they do not fare as well with funding and career placement. A committee of the School of Graduate Studies is investigating this and other features of women's experience in graduate school.

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS: Women are approximately 1/2 of graduate students but hold fewer than 1/3 of teaching assistantships, as reported by a CUEW study.

MATERNITY LEAVE: Women students may take from one to three terms maternity leave from their studies; however they lose their student status and must begin repaying OSAP. OISE allows women on maternity leave to pick up their OISE scholarship when they return.

Women who work as teaching assistants now receive one month paid maternity leave. (This was pegged at two weeks from 1981-89.) This provision needs to be expanded to include other forms of parental leave.

WOMEN AS STAFF

The University employs over 5,000 staff (two-thirds of whom are women) in a wide range of occupations such as cleaners, student counsellors, secretaries, lab technicians, accountants, food service workers, graphic artists, and computer programmers. In many cases they do behind the scenes work which is taken for granted. Although some of these employees belong to unions, the majority do not. As well, there is an unknown number of "casual" workers who are not covered by any of the University's policies. Guidelines are needed for the conversion of temporary positions to full staff positions, as many women remain in long-term "casual" positions which lack benefits.

The contracting out of campus services especially affects unionized women (many of whom are women of colour or immigrants to Canada). While most workers are protected by union contracts negotiated earlier, there have been attempts in recent years to "save money" through contracting out to firms with non-union and underpaid labour.

Particular sectors face particular problems. CUPE 3261 (including cleaners and caretakers) reports that the movement of women into supervisory positions, such as caretaker and lead-hand, is slow, and that equal pay is needed for women in these positions. Library workers (CUPE 1230) report harassment of and discrimination against people of colour.

PAY EQUITY: The University must meet Ontario rules for equal pay for work of equal value. UTSA has at this point withdrawn from the Presidential Advisory Committee on Pay Equity, maintaining that the job evaluation plan the University uses privileges managerial (most often male) duties. The scheme unduly values such factors as supervision and contacts with other staff, and rates skills with power tools or laboratory equipment, for example, ahead of skills with office equipment. Further, the plan does not adequately describe the range of work typically done by women.

BENEFITS: Leave for family responsibility is currently left to the discretion of the supervisor and needs policy entrenchment. Benefits and leaves must be extended to include non-traditional families.

VISUAL DISPLAY TERMINAL USE: A progressive policy on the ergonomic aspects of VDT use has been implemented. However, provision for reproductive safety should be guaranteed. (OISE policy allows for this.) Greater public awareness of these issues is needed.

WOMEN AS FACULTY

NUMBERS: The percentage of female faculty has remained unchanged over the last three years at 13.7%, and some figures indicate a slight decline. Women teaching staff are clustered in sessional, tutorial, and contractually-limited positions. Women faculty remain concentrated in the humanities. Current slowdowns in hiring threaten to curtail any redress.

SALARY: An UTFA study gives a preliminary suggestion that salary discrepancy may be as much as 15% between men and women of comparable rank. A salary regression analysis has now been undertaken to investigate this. Any such analysis should take account of the ways in which women's work (e.g., work on committees on women's study and women's issues) falls outside the merit pay and promotion schemes.

CLASSROOM

CURRICULUM: There has been some increase in material related to women's concerns and perspectives, but this varies from department to department and from class to class, and the curriculum remains largely male-centred. Students report continuing classroom difficulties, finding many instructors impatient or even hostile when students raise women's issues. Women-related material is generally superadded to the curriculum and thus is vulnerable to cutbacks.

WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAMME: The programme remains severely undersupported, with 1.7 full-time faculty. Cutbacks will make staffing through release-time and cross-appointments difficult to maintain. The Women's Studies collection receives no money from the U of T library system.

On a more positive note, an anonymous grant of $500,000 has endowed a visiting speaker series on "Third World Women and Women of Colour." Over 2,000 students are currently taking courses, and a joint U of T/OISE graduate programme in women's studies is in the planning stages. Scarborough College now also offers a programme in women's studies.

CAMPUS LIFE

STATUS OF WOMEN: The Status of Women Office was initiated in 1984 as the result of lobbying by a coalition of women's groups. The Officer reports to the President and has no direct administrative authority, working through recommendation only.

ATHLETICS: While funding and resources for women's athletics is an historic problem, the department reports approximately equal participation for men and women in intercollegiate programmes, and in this area the U of T compares favourably to other Ontario universities. However, women's athletics need a higher profile and more promotion. The personal security of women using sports facilities remains a problem.

WOMEN'S CENTRE: In this century, donors have given money and a building for a campus women's centre, although the University did not honour these bequests. Now, after many years of struggle, the Women's Centre finally has (one) room of its own. It is committed to fighting sexism and racism together. Although it provides a number of important services to campus women, it lacks base funding from SAC or the University.

RECOMMENDATIONS

•U of T needs formal mechanisms for improving the status of women. It is far too reliant on the unrewarded volunteer efforts of its constituents in developing initiatives and providing services.

•The University needs targets for recruitment of women, people of colour, lower-income students, and students whose families did not attend university. Requirements for admission should be changed so they do not discriminate against these applicants, and a wider range of life skills should be acknowledged as valuable preparation for academic work.

•The University must develop ties to primary and secondary educational institutions to ensure that women are prepared to enter the sciences, engineering and other fields where they are under-represented. To meet objectives for representation of women at all levels and in all areas, recruitment has to begin early.

•The University must be more active in lobbying the government for greater accessibility and for the funding changes to make access possible.

•Better support services are needed if women are to succeed at U of T. Services such as child care should be factored into the University's long-range planning, and there should be an administrative officer directly responsible for the development of childcare services.

•More residence units have to be built to serve all sectors, including women with children and women with disabilities.

•Improved facilities are needed for the Transitional Year Program, Woodsworth College and the Women's Centre.

•Base funding is needed for the Women's Centre.

•Officers detailed to women's concerns have no administrative power to make things happen. Their positions should be restructured to allow the officers greater responsibiltiy and autonomy.

•Alternative locations for the Employment Equity and Status of Women Officer should be considered. Locating their offices near the Sexual Harassment Office or the Ombudsman might facilitate both the pooling of resources and the development of a more pro-active stance.

•The Safety Awareness Officer must be well known and readily accessible, otherwise women's security concerns will continue to go unreported and unheard.

•The Transitional Year Program needs a science and math tutor, as well as more extensive counselling services.

•Progress, where it is made, is the result of intensive work by individuals and groups. Without appropriate policy, however, gains cannot be consolidated. The University must act on its philosophical commitment to gender and racial equality by developing and quickly implementing gender equity and a human rights policy.

•The administration needs to take a bolder, more active, and more facilitating stance to improve the status of women at the University of Toronto.

Would a coalition of campus women's groups help to lobby more effectively for change? We will be helping to organize a Women's Spring Meeting with the Status of Women Office and other campus groups where these issues and others will be discussed. The conference and reception are open to all. It will be held:

Thursday, March 29 from 4:00 to 7:00 in the Student Lounge, Room 705 Library Sciences (Bissell) Building, 140 St. George Street.

If you plan to attend, or have questions about the Spring Meeting, please contact Lois Reimer (Status of Women Officer) at 978-2757.

Please join us for an informal discussion about this Audit and policies affecting the status of women at U of T on ***Thursday, March 8, International Women's Day, in the Whetmore Hall cafeteria at New College, from 12:00 to 1:00.*** *There will also be a short discussion about gender neutral language from 1:00 to 2:00 in the same location. These sessions will be part of the March 8 Teach-In on Sexism and Violence.*

We appreciate the thoughtful advice and information supplied by campus groups and individuals. We thank the following for providing the funds to print the Audit: the Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students, the Canadian Union of Educational Workers, the Graduate Students Union, the Students Administrative Council, the Status of Women Office, the University of Toronto Faculty Association, the University of Toronto Staff Association, and the Women's Centre. The Staff Association also provided facilities and assistance for typesetting the Audit.

We would be pleased to receive your ideas and responses. Write to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women, care of APUS, Room 1089, Sidney Smith Hall, University of Toronto, M5S 1A1.